Synopsis

on

Antecedents and Outcomes of Employee Voice in Indian Service Sector

For registration

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I. Topic of Research

Antecedents and Outcomes of Employee Voice in Indian Service Sector

II. Introduction

Today's organizations understand the power of employees input and the benefits that can be reaped from the untapped operational and strategic knowledge already residing inside the organization. Nonetheless, many organizations continue to struggle in finding meaningful ways to develop a culture that encourages and sustains employees to communicate ideas and suggestions. Employee voice is formal or informal discretionary behaviors involving the upward communication of thoughts, recommendations, grievances and personal views regarding various work-related issues to bring improvement or change in the existing work practices (Morrison, 2014). Van Dyne (1998) defined employee voice as promotive that challenge the status quo, as it provides innovative suggestions such as necessary medications in the existing work practices even when others do not agreed. Further, Gorden (1988) considered employee voice as organizational dialectic and categorizes it into active, passive, constructive and destructive depending on the corporate culture. Later on, various researchers have argued that employee voice is multidimensional, proactive and positive construct (Dyne *et al.,* 2003) and is one of the pillars of effective organizational functioning and subordinate performance with managerial openness (Detert and Burris, 2007).

Due to rapid growth in the research of employee voice, many researchers have examined the antecedents and outcomes of employee voice in different cultural settings. Previous research has shown that employee voice is determined by several individual (job attitudes, personality, demographics) and contextual factors (leadership style, organization structure, organization culture) (Chamberlin *et al.,* 2017; Morrison, 2014). Whereas, employee voice have notable influence on the individual (job attitudes) and organizational outcomes (performance and group harmony) (Morrison, 2014). Subsequently, prior research have explained the antecedents or the outcomes of employee voice separately, but very few studies have considered an integrated model of antecedents and

outcomes of employee voice into a single theoretical framework (Chamberlin, 2017; Koyuncu *et al.*, 2013; Morrison, 2014). Over the last three decades the empirical work on employee voice and its sub dimensions has increased. As far as we know, previous research on employee voice has been focused on western countries and China mainly, while there is limited research in Indian context (Jha *et al.*, 2019). Therefore, this study will consider both the antecedents and outcomes of employee voice in service sector across India.

III. Review of Literature

The review of literature consists of a detailed conceptualization of all variables and theories that help in supporting the relationship between the antecedents and outcomes of employee voice. Based on this review research gap is found out and relevant objectives and hypothesis are developed.

Employee Voice

The voice construct was first conceptualized by Hirschman (1970) as being one of the four forms in which employees express their discontentment at workplace. Employee voice construct attracts the attention of scholars from various fields such as organizational behavior (OB), HRM and industrial relations (IR) and all of them have conceptualized employee voice differently. In OB, Employee voice is defined as "formal or informal discretionary behaviors involving the upward communication of ideas, opinions and suggestions regarding various work-related issues to bring improvement or change in the existing work practices" (Morrison, 2014). In industrial relation, employee voice refers to expression of conditions where they work and provide various provisions such as grievance handling and whistle blowing. Whereas, HRM literature includes both OB and IR traditions (Wilkinson *et al.*, 2019). Employee voice is a broader term and includes various dimensions such as constructive, destructive, active and passive (Gorden, 1988). The most commonly referred and widely studied by various researchers are promotive and prohibitive voice (Liang *et al.*, 2012).

In line with the Van Dyne definition of employee voice, Liang and colleagues (2012) conceptualized employee voice into promotive and prohibitive voice. Liang and colleagues (2012) defined promotive voice as suggesting novel ideas and opinions to improve the working of the organization. This type of voice is mainly focused on the future ideal state. Whereas, Prohibitive voice is defined as employees expressing their concerns towards any potential harm to the organization and about the existing work practices which may be harmful to the employees in the coming years. Past research have shown that employee voice is influenced by various antecedents

such as leadership styles (Deter and Burris, 2007, Jada, 2018), proactive personality (Wijaya, 2018), psychological safety (Opoku *et al.,* 2019), leader member exchange (Deter and Burris, 2007), demographics (Koyuncu *et al.,* 2013), and culture (Botero and Van Dyne, 2009). Recent research in this field also highlights various outcomes of employee voice such as job satisfaction (Liang and Yeh, 2019; Nawakitphaitoon and Zhang, 2020), performance (Song *et al.,* 2019, Zhang *et al.,* 2020), engagement (Holland *et al.,* 2017; Rees *et al.,* 2013), commitment (Kim and Leach, 2020), turnover intentions (Prince and Rao, 2020). Past research shows that employee voice also results in workplace bullying (Liang and Yeh, 2019) and challenging voice have detrimental effect on endorsement and performance rating (Burris, 2012).

Antecedents of Employee Voice

Literature review highlights various antecedents of employee voice which encourage employees to voice out their opinions. All these antecedents are considered as independent variables for the study.

Servant Leadership

Liden and colleagues (2008) presented servant leadership as multidimensional construct and uncovered its various dimensions such as taking care of employees personal issues and well-being, warn about something wrong, giving back to the community, putting employee interest first, developing conceptual skills, empowering them to grow and succeed and to follow the ethical principles (Liden *et al.,* 2015). When leader follows such kind of behavior and establish a strong social relationship with employees that is based on trust and fair treatment in the workplace. Then employees also reciprocate the same by engaging themselves in constructive voice (Yan *et al.,* 2016). Previous research has shown a positive relationship between servant leadership and employee voice (Lapointe *et al.,* 2018; Lee *et al.,* 2020).

Supportive Leadership

Supportive leader provides sympathy, care, psychological support and express their concern towards followers. They also give them due preferences while making decisions (Rafferty *et al.,* 2006). When employees feel that they receive support from their leaders they involve themselves in voice behavior (Elsaied, 2018). Supportive leader by providing adequate advocacy practices encourage employees to voice the opinions and suggestions (Elasied, 2019). Previous findings have shown a significant association between supportive leadership and employee voice (Eibl, 2020).

Leader-Member Exchange

Leader-member exchange is defined as a multidimensional construct and a high-quality relationship enjoyed by the leader and his subordinates having mutual trust, loyalty and reciprocation (Graen and Uhl-Bien, 1995). In higher-quality relationships employees can develop a better sense of obligation with the leader and also express their suggestions and opinions without any hesitation (Jada, 2019). Previous research has shown the significant relationship between leader-member exchange and employee voice (Opoku *et al.*, 2019; Wang *et al.*, 2016).

Job Autonomy

Job autonomy is referred as the degree to which job gives independence, autonomy, liberty and choice to arrange their work and choose suitable techniques to do the job (Hackman and Oldham, 1976). High job autonomy empoweres individuals and increases their efficacy in engaging in voice behavior (Dedahanov *et al.,* 2018). Job autonomy also provides a sense of psychological safety to employees so that they can make their own decisions and also challenge the status quo without any fear of retaliation from the organizations (Lam and Mayer, 2014). Individuals having higher autonomy actively participate in work related issues, decision making and problem solving (Tangirala and Ramanujam, 2008). Previous research has shown positive relationship between job autonomy and employee voice (Dedahanov *et al.*, 2018; Lam and Mayer, 2014).

Proactive Personality

Proactive personality is referred as the degree to which employee can influence the changes in the environment and to what extent they can initiate to make impactful changes in the environment (Seibert and Crant, 2001). Proactive employees chase and achieve their goals for their psychological satisfaction as compared to less proactive employees (Greguras and Diefendorff, 2010). Proactive employees express themselves effectively and suggest new and creative ways of doing any tasks for improving the functioning of the organization (Kanten *et al.,* 2012). Proactive personality is explored as the prominent determinant of employee voice and previous findings have shown a positive relationship between proactive personality and employees voice (Elsaied, 2018; Kanten *et al.,* 2012; Wijaya, 2019).

Employee Resilience

Employee Resilience as one of the constituents of psychological capital (hope, self-efficacy, optimism and resilience) is defined as the tendency to bounce back and sometimes above that to succeed (Luthans *et al.,* 2007). Resilience is strongly linked to proactive behaviors like voice.

Resilient employees indulge in voice behavior and feel comfortable in critically discussing about current practices and providing new ideas that could reduce the errors in future (Caniels and Baaten, 2018). Resilient employees have the qualities to bounce back at the time of failure and give their voice. And also conservation of resource framework suggest that when employees are deprived of resources such as resilience than they are hesitant to give their voice because it will exploit their energy or resources (Prihatsanti *et al.,* 2020). Previous research have shown positive relationship between employee resilience and employee voice (Caniels and Baaten, 2018; Prihatsanti *et al.,* 2020).

Psychological Safety

Kahn (1990) defined psychological safety as expressing themselves fearlessly against the negative consequences and the degree to which employees perceives that organization will not punish and harm their status and career for speaking up and expressing themselves. If organization provide psychologically safe environment to the employees then they behave actively in generating new ideas and provides valuable input in solving organizational problems (Liang *et al.,* 2012; Subhakaran *et al.,* 2018). Past research has shown that psychological safety is strongly linked to employee voice (Jada, 2018; Liang *et al.,* 2012; Opoku *et al.,* 2019).

Outcomes of Employee Voice

Literature review highlights various outcomes of employee voice. In this study, employee performance and employee engagement are the outcomes of employee voice and it is also considered as the dependent variable.

Employee Performance

Employee performance represents the employee's financial or non-financial output that has a direct correlation with the organization's performance and progress. Through the review, performance is divided into in-role and extra-role dimensions. In-role performance is characterized as those results and behaviours that are officially expected and directly serve the organization's objectives (Williams and Anderson, 1991). The extra-role of an employee is defined as discretionary behaviors that are considered to directly promote an organization's successful functioning without actually affecting an employee's effectiveness (MacKenzie *et al.,* 1991).

Past studies have explored employee voice as a prominent driver to improve the employee performance in the workplace (Morrison, 2014). If employees can share their ideas and opinions and receive an opportunity to correct their problems then they raise themselves as better performers and

enhance performance of the organization (Morrison, 2014). Previous research has shown that employee voice is positively related to employee performance, job performance, task performance (Morrison, 2014, Song *et al.,* 2019; Zhang *et al.,* 2020).

Employee Engagement

Schaufeli *et al.,* (2002) defined engagement as "a positive, fulfilling, work-related state of mind that is characterized by vigor, dedication, and absorption". Employees voice practices in the workplace facilitate positive interactions between employees and the organization. When employees have the opportunity to express their views and suggestions openly then they feel valued and respond by engaging themselves fully in the workplace (Holland *et al.,* 2017). Employee voice is considered as a key driver to motivate and engage employees in the workplace (Rees *et al.,* 2013). The previous findings have shown that employee voice is positively related to employee engagement (Maymand *et al.,* 2017; Nivedita Jha *et al.,* 2019; Rees *et al.,* 2013, Ruck *et al.,* 2017). Previous research has shown that employee engagement significantly predicts the employee performance (Anitha, 2014). An engaged employees do their job efficiently and with focused mind and improves the performance of the organization (Saxena and Srivastava, 2015).

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework explains the core theory that is used to explain the relationship between antecedents and outcomes of employee voice.

Social Exchange Theory

Blau's (1964) Social Exchange Theory explains the exchange relationship that individual have with their leader and working organization. When the employees receive favorable treatment from their organization then they also respond favorably to make a balance between input and output (Jada, 2017; Hu *et al.,* 2018). When an organization value their employees contribution then employees also reciprocate by showing empowered and proactive behavior by engaging actively in extra-role behavior (Maan *et al.,* 2020; Newman *et al.,* 2015). When employees get opportunities to express their ideas and suggestions in psychologically safe environment then they easily raise their voice, provide feedback and also highlight the errors in front of their supervisors (Newman *et al.,* 2017). When a high-quality exchange relationship develops in the organizations, employees can freely exchange their ideas and suggestions and develop a better sense of their supervisor (Jada, 2019).

Social exchange theory also explains the influence of employee voice on the employees outcomes because when employees perceive that their contribution is valued and they have an equal say in the

organizational decision making, then they produce more positive outcomes by showing higher performance (Song *et al.*, 2019), engagement (Rees *et al.*, 2011) and satisfaction (Nawakitphaitoon and Zhang, 2020) towards their organization.

Research Gaps

Based on the understanding of the literature, the study would like to highlight the following research gaps:

Employee voice play a very significant role in today's dynamic environment, but the existing research have paid very less attention to the various predictors which encourage employee voice. So, more studies are required to explore the antecedents of employee voice (Ghani and Hyder, 2020). More recently different type of leadership styles is attracting the attention of researchers as one of the prominent antecedent of employee voice (Jada, 2018). Limited studies have considered the supportive style of leadership (Elasied, 2019) and only 7 studies were found that explored the relationship between servant leadership and voice (Lee *et al.*, 2020).

Past research highlighted that other potential antecedents of employee voice such as proactive personality (Andiyasari and Riantoputra, 2020), job autonomy and leader-member exchange has not been studied much (Ghani and Hyder, 2020).

Also, the studies on the effect of promotive and prohibitive voice on employee outcomes in the workplace is scare (Jha *et al.*, 2019; Kim and Leach, 2020; Song, 2020; Zhang *et al.*, 2020).

IV. Rationale of the study

Despite the growing interest in employee voice, the results arising from an extensive preliminary database search suggested that there are very limited studies that reviewed and integrated the evidence concerning the implications associated with employee voice. This study is fragmented into two parts. First, is to understand the various antecedents which encourage the employee voice in the organization. And second, is to study the outcomes of employee voice. In past few years, scholars have shown considerable interest in employee voice construct. Employee voice is one of the significant components affecting the organization's performance. Employee voice construct requires more attention as it functions to build efficiency in the workplace through its influence on employee engagement and satisfaction. Although much work has not been done on employee voice, very limited studies are available that examined different antecedents and outcomes of employee voice in a single framework, especially in India. Hence, this study is designed to examine the proposed antecedents and outcomes of employee voice in the service sector in India.

V. Objectives and Hypothesis

The objective of the study is making meaningful enquiry and investigation on the various antecedents and outcomes of employee voice in Indian service sector. Pertinent to the above main purpose, the study intends to meet the following specific objectives:

1. To assess the effect of antecedents on employee voice.
2. To assess the effect of employee voice on employee performance.
3. To assess the mediating effect of employee outcomes on the relationship between employee voice and employee performance.

Hypothesis

To attain the objectives of the study, this study hypothesize that:

There are various antecedents which encourage employee voice in the organization and these antecedents provide a risk-free, open environment for employees to speak. Some of the antecedents which are discovered after literature review are leadership styles such as servant (Lee *et al.,* 2019), supportive (Elasied, 2019), job autonomy (Lam and Mayer, 2014), proactive personality (Elsaied, 2018), psychological safety (Opoku *et al.*, 2019), employee resilience (Prihatsanti *et al.,* 2020) and leader-member exchange (Opoku *et al.,* 2019). Thus the following hypothesis is framed as:

H_{01}. There is a positive association between antecedents and employee voice.

Past research has explored the impact of employee voice on employee performance (Song *et al.,* 2019; Zhang *et al.,* 2020). If employees can share their ideas and opinions then they raise themselves as better performers and enhance performance of the organization (Morrison, 2014).

H_{02}. There is a positive association between employee voice and employee performance.

Past research has explored the impact of employee voice on employee engagement (Rees *et al.,* 2013). When employees have the opportunity to express their views and suggestions openly then they feel valued and respond by engaging themselves fully in the workplace (Holland *et al.,* 2017). Employee engagement mediates between employee voice and performance (Jha *et al.,* 2019). Previous research has shown that employee engagement significantly predicts the employee performance (Anitha, 2014; Saxena and Srivastava, 2015).

H_{03}. The relationship between employee voice and employee performance will be mediated by employee engagement.

VI. Research Methodology

The research methodology is developed to empirically examine the objectives of the study. It includes the systematic procedure for collecting and analyzing data, sampling design, research instruments and tools and construction of the questionnaire, the methods of data collection and statistical tests used for data analysis.

a. Research Design

The design of research would be exploratory cum descriptive describing various antecedents and outcomes of employee voice.

b. Type of Data

Both primary data and secondary data would be collected for achieving the above-mentioned objectives in the study.

c. Sampling Plan

(1) Sampling Unit: The sample would comprise various employees working in service sector in India.

(2) Sampling Size: The sampling size would consist of the employees working in service sector. The sample size would consist of 600 employees across their designations/cadre across the service sector. The sample size can be increased according to requirement of the study.

(3) Sampling Area: The sample would be drawn from the different organizations operating in service sector focusing on banking and financial service, hospitality, hospitals, IT sector etc.

(4) Sampling technique: Sampling design will make a mix of random and convenience sampling used for collecting the data from the employees working in the service sector**.**

d. Research Instrument:

Standardized scales would be used to collect data from the respondents. The questionnaire would comprise of two sections described as under: Section A would include the demographics of the employees such as gender, age, educational qualification, etc. Section B would include items related to the variables taken up in the study. These are employee voice and various antecedents and outcomes associated with it. It would also comprise the statements of items to be measured. The statements of the questionnaire would be adapted from different research studies. The responses on the items would be measured using a Likert scale.

e. Research Tools

Descriptive statistical tools such as mean, standard deviation would be used. Correlation and

regression would be used to demonstrate the direction and degree of relationship between the variables. Moreover, other advanced tools if required as per the requirements of the objectives would also be used.

VII. Tentative Chapter Scheme

Chapter 1: Introduction

This chapter would provide brief descriptions of the variables taken up in the study. Moreover, a light would be thrown on the concept of employee voice, its antecedents and outcomes.

Chapter 2: Review of Literature

This chapter would include a review of the existing literature related to the variables taken up in the study.

Chapter 3: Research Methodology

The third chapter would highlight the importance of conducting the study. The objectives of the study would be mentioned in this chapter. It would describe the detailed research methodology including the sampling design, research instruments and tools, construction of the questionnaire, the methods of data collection and statistical tests used for data analysis.

Chapter 4: Data Analysis and Interpretation

The fourth chapter would include the analysis of data and interpretation of results.

Chapter 5: Conclusion and Recommendations

The final chapter would include the findings of the study. It would include discussions based on the findings and results. It would also provide recommendations to the organizations, managers, and co-workers to enhance employee voice in the organization which in turn enhances employee performance and job satisfaction in the workplace.

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Signature of Supervisor **Signature of Scholar**

Signature of Director

(With official seal)